

2.2 What is Culture?



Focus Questions

- How do Anthropologists define culture?
- What characteristics do all cultures share?



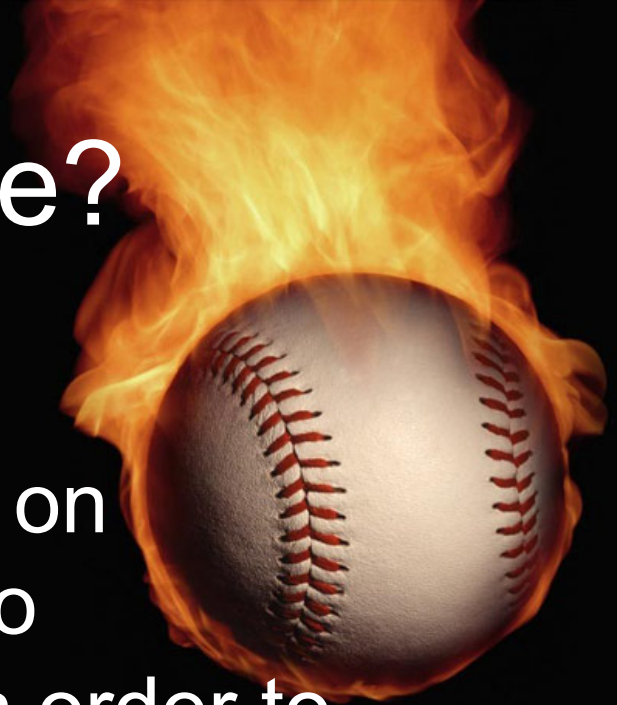
What is Culture?

- What is culture and where does it come from?
- At one time it was believed that inherited characteristics, or nature directed human behavior
- People in a specific culture act they way that they do because they inherited those behaviors from their parents



What is culture?

- As anthropologists began to believe that culture is based on the way people learn how to adapt to their environment in order to survive
- In other words, culture is a result of nurture



What is Culture?

- Anthropologists now define culture as “all the learned behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, values, and ideals of a particular society or population



Nature vs Nurture Debate



Margaret Mead and the Nature-Nurture Debate

- One of the most widely known Anthropologists of the 20th century
- Mead studied the gender roles of men and women (cultural anthropology) in 3 different cultures in New Guinea



Margaret Mead and the Nature-Nurture Debate

Arapesh

- Children were treated warmly and that both men and women participated actively in child care
- Consequently, both genders grew up to view the world in a trusting way
- Aggression was not acceptable



Margaret Mead and the Nature-Nurture Debate

Mundagumor

- Both girls and boys were treated harshly and left to fend for themselves
- They learned to view others as potential enemies



Margaret Mead and the Nature-Nurture Debate

Mundagumor

- Both men and women grew up very aggressive



Margaret Mead and the Nature-Nurture Debate

Tchambuli

- Gender roles were reversed
- Women were tough and hearty
- Men were passive and looked after the house



Margaret Mead and the Nature-Nurture Debate

- Mead concluded that traits were clearly learned, not by hereditary means



Characteristics of a Culture

- Material and Non Material



Culture is Learned



Culture is Learned



Culture is Shared



Culture defines nature



Culture shapes how we
perceive and understand the
world



Culture has patterns

